

Claims

- 1) A method of treating meat comprising a meat treatment step in which new meat surfaces are generated, characterized in that said step is carried out in an atmosphere comprising CO<sub>2</sub> and substantially free from O<sub>2</sub>.
- 2) A method according to claim 1 in which the atmosphere is provided by gas which has been sterilized by UV irradiation.
- 3) A method according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein the meat is maintained in the temperature range -2 to 0 °C.
- 4) A method according to any preceding claim wherein the carbon dioxide concentration is selected so that the meat surfaces have pH values of 3.5 or less.
- 5) A method according to any preceding claim including a plurality of meat treatment steps in at least one of which new meat surfaces are generated, all of said steps being carried out in said atmosphere.
- 6) A method according to any preceding claim including a step of decontaminating processing equipment that comes into contact with said meat by treatment with said atmosphere and/or by UV irradiation.
- 7) A method according to any preceding claim wherein the meat is processed in the substantial absence of light.

8) Apparatus for carrying out a method according to any preceding claim comprising a treatment chamber containing means for generating new meat surfaces, and a source of CO<sub>2</sub> coupled to the chamber.